

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 139622

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY SAIGON

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E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: PFOR, VS

SUBJECT: SENATOR KENNEDY PRESS RELEASE ON ICRC PROGRAMS IN
INDOCHINA

HEREWITH TEXT OF SENATOR KENNEDY PRESS RELEASE JUNE 27:

BEGIN TEXT.

SENATOR EDWARD M. KENNEDY, CHAIRMAN OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON
REFUGEES, TODAY CHARGED THE UNITED STATES AMBASSADOR TO
SAIGON, GRAHAM MARTIN, WITH TRYING TO "SABOTAGE" INTER-
NATIONAL RED CROSS RELIEF AND MEDICAL PROGRAMS FOR WAR
VICTIMS IN INDOCHINA.

SENATOR KENNEDY CITED RECENT CABLES TO THE DEPARTMENT OF
STATE FROM AMBASSADOR MARTIN, IN WHICH THE AMBASSADOR RECOM-
MENDS THAT THE UNITED STATES WITHDRAW ITS SUPPORT OF INTER-
NATIONAL RED CROSS PROGRAMS FOR WAR VICTIMS IN INDOCHINA. THE
SENATOR CALLED THE RECOMMENDATION A
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PAGE 02 STATE 139622

"PETTY FORM OF DIPLOMATIC BLACKMAIL", AND URGED THE DEPART-

MENT OF STATE TO REJECT IT.

THE TEXT OF SENATOR KENNEDY'S STATEMENT TO THE SENATE, AND EXCERPTS FROM AMBASSADOR MARTIN'S CABLES, FOLLOW.

TEXT OF THE STATEMENT

A GREAT DEAL HAS BEEN SAID OVER THE LAST COUPLE OF YEARS ABOUT RECONSTRUCTION IN INDOCHINA, AND THE RELIEF AND REHABILITATION OF WAR VICTIMS THROUGHOUT THE AREA. AN IMPORTANT THEME IN THIS DISCUSSION, ESPECIALLY OVER HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE FOR WAR VICTIMS, HAS BEEN THE HOPE IN MANY QUARTERS THAT A GOOD SHARE OF THIS EFFORT COULD BE CARRIED OUT UNDER SOME FORM OF INTERNATIONAL AUSPICES--IF NOT ON A REGIONAL BASIS, THEN AT LEAST FOR SOME OF THE SPECIAL PEOPLE PROBLEMS AND NEEDS WHICH EXIST IN THE SEPARATE WAR-AFFECTED AREAS.

BASED ON LENGTHY HEARINGS AND INQUIRY BY THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON REFUGEES, WHICH I SERVE AS CHAIRMAN; ON THE FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF A SPECIAL SUBCOMMITTEE STUDY MISSION TO INDOCHINA LAST YEAR; AND ON VERY EXTENSIVE CONVERSATIONS WITH EXPERTS AND GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS IN THIS COUNTRY AND OVERSEAS, I HAVE SHARED THIS HOPE. AND, ALONG WITH OTHER MEMBERS OF THE SENATE, I HAVE LONG ADVOCATED THAT OUR GOVERNMENT ACTIVELY ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT INITIATIVES FOR THE EXPANDING PARTICIPATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS, ITS SPECIALIZED AGENCIES, THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS, AND SIMILAR ORGANIZATIONS IN RELIEF AND REHABILITATION PROGRAMS IN INDOCHINA. SENATORS MAY RECALL THAT LAST YEAR, THE SENATE ADOPTED MY AMENDMENTS FOR THIS PURPOSE TO THE FY 1974 FOREIGN ASSISTANCE AUTHORIZATION BILL.

THE ADMINISTRATION'S POLICY TOWARD INTERNATIONALIZING ASSISTANCE FOR INDOCHINA HAS BEEN AMBIGUOUS TO SAY THE LEAST. DESPITE PUBLIC STATEMENTS TO THE CONTRARY--BEFORE THE REFUGEE SUBCOMMITTEE AND ELSEWHERE--THE RECORD IS CLEAR THAT, APART FROM SOME TOKENISM, OUR GOVERNMENT HAS DONE PRECIOUS LITTLE TO ENCOURAGE OR SUPPORT HUMANITARIAN INITIATIVES BY THE UNITED NATIONS AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 STATE 139622

BODIES.

AND EVEN TODAY, WHEN A MORE POSITIVE ATTITUDE SEEMS TO BE DEVELOPING WITHIN OUR GOVERNMENT, THE ADMINISTRATION IS ATTACHING UNREASONABLE CONDITIONS TO OUR SUPPORT OF NEW INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS FOR WAR VICTIMS--AND SOME HIGH OFFICIALS IN OUR GOVERNMENT SEEM DETERMINED TO SCUTTLE THE SMALL PROGRAMS ALREADY IN OPERATION.

ONE CASE IN POINT INVOLVES THE ADMINISTRATION'S ATTITUDE TOWARD THE MODEST INDOCHINA PROGRAM RECENTLY APPROVED BY THE EXECUTIVE BOARD OF UNICEF. WE HAVE INDICATED OUR GENERAL SUPPORT FOR AN EXPANDING UNICEF PRESENCE IN INDOCHINA--BUT, ONLY ON THE CONDITION THAT IT WILL SERVE THE

ADMINISTRATION'S POLICY OF MAXIMIZING OUR PRESENCE AND CONTINUING OUR DIRECT INVOLVEMENT IN THE POLITICAL CONFRONTATIONS IN THE AREA. AND SO WE ARE ATTACHING POLITICAL STRINGS TO OUR UNICEF CONTRIBUTIONS AND TRYING TO BLOCK THE AGENCY'S FREEDOM IN MEETING THE NEEDS OF CHILDREN WHEREVER THEY EXIST IN INDOCHINA. I SUBMIT THAT SUCH ATTITUDES ON THE PART OF OUR GOVERNMENT UNDERCUT THE EFFECTIVENESS OF UNICEF AND THREATEN TO UNRAVEL THE INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION WHICH IS NEEDED TO MEET THE HUMANITARIAN NEEDS OF ORPHANS AND CHILDREN AND WAR VICTIMS THROUGHOUT INDOCHINA.

BUT AN EVEN MORE DISTRESSING SIGN OF SOME ATTITUDES IN OUR GOVERNMENT, IS RECORDED IN RECENT "CONFIDENTIAL" CABLES TO THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE FROM AMBASSADOR GRAHAM MARTIN IN SAIGON. THE CABLES CONCERN AMERICAN RELATIONS WITH THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS (ICRC) AND OUR COUNTRY'S SUPPORT OF THE INDOCHINA RELIEF PROGRAMS OF THE INDOCHINA OPERATIONAL GROUP (IOG) OF THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS.

THE AMBASSADOR'S CABLES WERE PROMPTED, APPARENTLY, BY RECENT ICRC ACTIVITIES RELATING TO A CONFERENCE OF GOVERNMENT EXPERTS WHICH WILL MEET IN SWITZERLAND IN SEPTEMBER TO CONSIDER RESTRAINTS ON THE USE OF "WEAPONS THAT MAY CAUSE UNNECESSARY SUFFERING OR HAVE INDISCRIMINATE EFFECTS".

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 04 STATE 139622

IN AN EFFORT TO ENCOURAGE THE BROADEST POSSIBLE PARTICIPATION IN THIS INTERNATIONAL MEETING, THE ICRC, AS CONVENER OF THE CONFERENCE, HAS BEEN SOLICITING THE VIEWS OF INDIVIDUAL GOVERNMENTS OVER A POSSIBLE INVITATION TO THE SO-CALLED PROVISIONAL REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT OF SOUTH VIETNAM (PRG).

AS THE UNITED STATES DID EARLIER THIS YEAR AT THE GENEVA DIPLOMATIC CONFERENCE TO UPDATE THE GENEVA CONVENTIONS OF 1949, OUR GOVERNMENT IS OPPOSING ANY PARTICIPATION BY THE PRG IN THE SEPTEMBER MEETING. PERHAPS THIS IS GOOD POLICY--BUT THE FACT REMAINS THAT AMBASSADOR MARTIN HAS EVEN OBJECTED TO THE ISSUE BEING RAISED BY THE ICRC. IN A RECENT CABLE TO THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, HE SAID THIS "KICKS THE UNITED STATES (GOVERNMENT) AROUND", AND HE

ACCUSED THE ICRC OF YIELDING "TO EASTERN BLOC, NORDIC,
AND PERHAPS OTHER PRESSURES TO CONTEMPTUOUSLY IGNORE US."

IN A MAY 31 CABLE FROM SAIGON, THE AMBASSADOR CONTINUES:

"ONE OF THE REASONS MAY BE THAT THROUGH PRIOR EXPERIENCE
ICRC FEELS IT CAN SAFELY DO SO. FOR EXAMPLT, AT THE SAME
MOMENT WE WERE RAISING THE QUESTION OF 'PRG' ATTENDANCE

AT LUCERNE, STATE'S (CABLE) ON 25 MAY INSTRUCTED GENEVA
THAT 'AID/WASHINGTON PLANS NEW 2 MILLION DOLLARS GRANT
TO RED CROSS IOG FROM FY 75 APPROPRIATION IF FUNDS PER-
MIT'. PERHAPS IT MIGHT MAKE IMPRESSION IF (U. S.) MIS-
SION IN GENEVA WERE TO INDICATE THAT IT HAD BEEN IN-
STRUCTED, WITHOUT EXPLANATION, TO WITHDRAW THAT AS-
SURANCE."

AMBASSADOR MARTIN THEN GOES ON TO SAY THAT "THIS RECOM-
MENDATION IS NOT INTENDED AS A PRESSURE EXERTING BLUFF.
IF THE ICRC PERSISTS ON THE COURSE ON WHICH IT IS TENTA-
TIVELY EMBARKED, WE HAVE SERIOUS DOUBTS THAT U. S. (GOVERN-
MENT) INTERESTS WILL BE SERVED BY MAKING THIS GRANT AND WE
WOULD NOT APPROVE A FINAL DECISION TO MAKE IT."

FOLLOW-UP CABLES FROM AMBASSADOR MARTIN REPEAT THE RECOM-
MENDATION, THAT THE "DEPARTMENT SHOULD INSTRUCT MISS ON
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PAGE 05 STATE 139622

GENEVA TO INDICATE TO THE ICRC THAT THE TENTATIVE AS-
SURANCE PREVIOUSLY GIVEN FOR 2 MILLION DOLLARS IN FY 1975
HAD BEEN WITHDRAWN."

ON THE FACE OF IT, THE AMBASSADOR'S RECOMMENDATION IS A
PETTY FORM OF DIPLOMATIC BLACKMAIL--WHICH NOT ONLY OF-
FENDS THE SENSIBILITIES OF MOST AMERICANS, BUT DOES A DIS-
SERVICE TO A HIGHLY RESPECTED INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION.
MOREOVER, IF THE RECOMMENDATION IS CARRIED OUT, IT
WOULD SABOTAGE NEEDED AND IMPORTANT INTERNATIONAL HUMANI-
TARIAN PROGRAMS AMONG WAR VICTIMS, ESPECIALLY IN CAMBODIA
WHERE THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS IS CARRYING A MAJOR BUR-
DEN IN MEETING MEDICAL NEEDS AMONG THE MILLIONS OF REFU-
GEES AND CIVILIAN CASUALTIES PRODUCED BY CONTINUING WAR.
AND GIVEN THE ICRC'S ACTIVITIES AND INTEREST IN PAST
YEARS OVER AMERICAN POWS IN NORTH VIETNAM, AND THE ORGANI-
ZATION'S POSSIBLE ASSISTANCE IN THE FULL ACCOUNTING OF
OUR MIAS, THE AMBASSADOR'S RECOMMENDATION IS INCREDIBLE.

I DO NOT KNOW THE FATE OF THE AMBASSADOR'S RECOMMENDATION.
BUT I HOPE IT IS FLATLY REJECTED. I HOPE THAT OUR GOVERN-
MENT HAS THE GOOD SENSE TO REAFFIRM OUR SUPPORT OF THE

IOG AND ITS HUMANITARIAN PROGRAMS IN INDOCHINA, AND THAT
OUR CONTRIBUTION TO THESE NEEDED HUMANITARIAN EFFORTS WILL
BE EVEN GREATER THAN IN THE PAST. THIS WOULD GET IN LINE
WITH THE INTENT OF CONGRESS, AND WITH PLEDGES GIVEN TO ME
PERSONALLY BY HIGH ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS LAST YEAR DURING
THE FOREIGN AID DEBATE.

I BRING THIS ISSUE TO THE SENATE, BECAUSE IT RAISES AGAIN
SERIOUS QUESTIONS ABOUT THE QUALIFICATIONS AND

REPRESENTATION OF THE AMERICAN AMBASSADOR TO SAIGON, WHO
CONTINUES TO DISTORT CONGRESSIONAL INTENT AND THE STATED
POLICY OF THE ADMINISTRATION HE REPRESENTS. AND HIS ABUSE
OF THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS, WHOSE HUMANITARIAN
SERVICES ARE INDESPENSABLE AROUND THE WORLD, SHOULD NOT BE
TOLERATED BY ANY AMERICAN.

END TEXT. SISCO

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